

SCIENCE & EDUCATION Impact

Benefits from USDA/Land-Grant Partnership

Better Farms, Better Land, Better Lives

1890s bring economic strength, healthy habits to economically disadvantaged.

The Second Morrill Act (1890) expanded access to higher education by founding land-grant universities for African Americans in each of the then-segregated Southern states. These 1890 institutions evolved into a major educational resource for the nation. For over a century, they have provided access to higher education for all regardless of race, sex, creed, or socio-economic status. The 1890 land-grant universities and Tuskegee University perform important public services by delivering scientific knowledge of agriculture, resource management, adult leadership and community development, and technology to farmers and urban residents. USDA and the 1890 land-grant universities are committed to serving the needs of all communities and families through education, research, and extension programs.

Payoff

- **Profits and sustainability for small farms.** Soil management practices re-researched by **Kentucky State** reduced sediment loss by up to 68 percent, depending on the crop, and reduced pesticide transport by 56 percent to 81 percent, depending on the pesticide. **Alabama A&M** brought biotechnology and its cost savings to smaller farms through on-farm demonstrations. A genetically engineered sweet corn variety that produces its own insect toxin saved one participant \$312 in insecticide applications.
- **Keeping it fresh.** A vegetable marketing program developed by **South Carolina State** is reversing the economic decline of small, minority-owned farms. Two farmers markets opened in Hampton and Jasper counties, and 43 small and part-time farmers were trained in risk management, marketing, production practices, postharvest handling, and food safety. The 23 farmers who participated in the two markets earned \$70,000 in sales, and people in the counties had increased access to fresh vegetables. **Alabama A&M** trained vegetable growers in Morgan County to participate in the Women, Infants, and Children nutrition program, allowing them to accept coupons from WIC recipients and low-income seniors at the Decatur Farm Market, where more than \$100,000 worth of coupons were processed.

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- **The forest and the trees.** **Tennessee, Tennessee State**, and 22 other 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions are developing forestandrange.org, a Web site for nonfederal landowners and managers. Seven of 16 modules have been completed, with topics ranging from wildfire prevention to estate planning to wildlife management. A small-forest landowner workshop, sponsored by **Southern University** and **Louisiana State AgCenter**, provided information on timber selling, estate planning, and environmental issues to 20 Louisiana landowners. Participants said the workshop would save or earn them an average of \$6,662 per person, or \$133,240 for the group, from their woodlots.
- **Best for the children.** Quality care in children's first five years is critical to their physical, social, emotional, and intellectual skills. With nearly 30 percent of children in day care and 6,750 single mothers in East Baton Rouge Parish in Louisiana, the availability of quality child care is critical. **Southern University** trained nearly 200 child care providers in the parish in nutrition and ethics. Of the participants, 90 percent learned to provide children with a diet moderate in sugar, low in salt and with plenty of grains, fruits, and vegetables. They said they would put this knowledge to use at their day care centers. All of them emerged with a better understanding of their ethical responsibilities to children and families. **South Carolina State** provided up to 20 hours of child development training to providers from 47 child care centers. Nearly 800 participants received the training in growth and development, curriculum development, and administration. The free training allowed the centers to divert dollars that would have been used for mandatory training to expand benefits for the children.
- **Growing their own.** Recovering drug and alcohol abusers are learning job skills and improving their work ethic and self-esteem with the help of **South Carolina State**. Residents of the Transformation Life Center have learned about vegetable production, built a greenhouse, and sold produce through a farmers market, earning dollars for the facility.
- **Taking it to the schools.** A young scholars program delivered by **Arkansas-Pine Bluff** for eight years reaches 100 low-income, minority children each year with an after-school program designed to boost their

math and science skills. The first five graduates have enrolled in college, and participants have improved their school performance in math and science. Families have benefited as well. Inspired by the achievement of their children, two parents are studying for their GED and one is enrolled in college. **South Carolina State** trained 124 high school seniors in financial planning, helping them learn how to prepare a household budget, implement a savings and investment plan, and save for a home and college. Testing after the course showed that students' financial knowledge had increased by 49 percent. The Ladies and Gentlemen's Club conducted by **Delaware State Extension** teaches youth to become respectable and responsible members of their schools and communities. The program has partnered with schools, law enforcement, and community organizations to provide 18,433 youth ages 5 to 19 conflict resolution, team building, self-esteem, mentoring, workforce preparation, financial planning, and drug and alcohol prevention. Since the program began, youth don't act out as often, and they score higher on state performance tests.

- **Choosier food buyers.** A consortium of 10 1890 institutions is helping limited-resource families improve their eating habits for better health. **Southern University** targeted 10 Louisiana parishes with nutrition programs for food stamp recipients, making more than 60,000 contacts with recipe fact sheets. More than 90 percent of recipients said they had learned at least one nutrition fact that would help them choose more healthful foods, all said they shopped from grocery lists, limited impulse shopping, and paid closer attention to food safety guidelines.



**Cooperative State Research, Education,
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Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service in cooperation with the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, the Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy, the Academic Programs Committee on Organization and Policy, the International Programs Committee on Organization and Policy, and the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center.

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